

Farm & Market REPORT



Vol. 78, No. 3, March 2001

Commissioner's Column

A Farm Bill for the Commonwealth

by Jonathan L. Healy

I've recently come from national agricultural meetings that have discussed the next federal Farm Bill. It is very interesting to me that 93 percent of North Dakota farming income comes from Farm Bill payments.

Here in Massachusetts I doubt that even one percent of farm income comes from federal farm subsidies because markets drive our farm economy. We are trying to educate our federal decision-makers about farm viability and ag business training programs that help our economy through profitable ag businesses rather than pure subsidies.

One of the tools we are missing here, however, is an appropriate agricultural financing mechanism for farm businesses that wish to expand, diversify, or add-value to their wholesale ventures.

Over 45 other states (Massachusetts not included) have agricultural bond financing mechanisms ("aggie bonds") that provide farmers with lower-than-market interest loan programs. The aggie bonds have helped spur more profitable agricultural businesses which, in turn, help strengthen the agricultural land base when developers knock on the doors.

In response to this need, a broad group of legislators, Farm Bureau, this Department, and others are supporting a comprehensive state farm viability act which could make Massachusetts the national leader in market-oriented agricultural policy and economic development programs.

Stay tuned for further information on this important legislation which could ensure the continued availability of fresh local food and stewardship of 570,000 acres of open space through a series of incentives, financing mechanisms, and business programs for our farming community.

Ag Marketing and Agro-Tech Grants Awarded

Agricultural organizations across the Commonwealth have been awarded nearly \$94,000 in Agricultural Marketing Grants and some \$167,000 in Agro-Environmental Technology Grants by the Department of Food and Agriculture.

The Ag. Marketing Grant program, now in its third year, is part of the Department's campaign to increase consumer awareness of local agriculture and expand the market for Massachusetts products.

The marketing grants are awarded on a competitive basis. A dollar match, in-kind services match or a combination is required. This year 25 non-profit organizations have been selected for grants ranging from \$800 to \$10,000 to implement statewide and community-based marketing projects.

The Department has awarded 12 grants to fund projects under the Agro-Environmental Technology Grant Program. The program funds demonstration projects, feasibility analyses and applied research designed to address Massachusetts' agriculture-related environmental concerns and agricultural needs and opportunities.

"We are very excited to be able to provide funding to a variety of agricultural organizations and projects across the Commonwealth," said Commissioner Jonathan L. Healy. "Farmers and consumers alike will reap the benefits of the projects funded this year. We appreciate the efforts of these groups to help improve the viability of farming in Massachusetts."

A list of 2001 grant recipients is available on-line at www.massdfa.org. For marketing grant information, contact Mary Jordan at 617-626-1750, mary.moffitt@state.ma.us. For Agro-Tech Grant information, contact Susan Phinney at 617-626-1772, susan.phinney@state.ma.us.▲

2nd Annual Rabies Vaccination Day Planned for April 7



Cities and towns across the Commonwealth will hold low-cost rabies vaccination clinics on Saturday, April 7th as

part of the Second Annual Statewide Rabies Vaccination Day. In light of alarming statistics concerning rabies, the Department's Bureau of Animal Health started this program to raise awareness of rabies and increase compliance with state vaccination laws. All dogs, cats and ferrets living in Massachusetts are required by law to be vaccinated against rabies.

Pet owners are encouraged to bring the family pet to be vaccinated against rabies on April 7th to locations designated by cities and towns. The cost of the vaccination will be about \$10 per animal. Check with your Town or City Hall for the local place, time and cost.

Statewide Rabies Vaccination Day is sponsored by DFA in cooperation with Mass. Department of Public Health, the Mass. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Animal Rescue League of Boston, the Mass. Veterinary Medical Assoc., the Veterinary Assoc. of the North Shore and the Cape Cod Veterinary Assoc. ▲

Ag. Day at the State House is March 27th

Massachusetts Agriculture Day at the State House will be held Tuesday, March 27th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Farmers and producers are encouraged to meet with legislators from 10:00 am to 11:30 am to discuss issues and concerns that affect the Massachusetts agricultural industry. At 11:30 am, there will be a brief speaking program at the Grand Staircase, followed by a "Taste of Massachusetts" Reception in the Great Hall. For more information, contact Mary Jordan at MDFA at 617-626-1750 or email at mary.moffitt@state.ma.us.

Erwin Joins DFA Staff

Welcome to Kelly Erwin who has joined DFA's Bureau of Markets as the Western Mass. Regional Marketing Specialist. Kelly has been a management consultant for the past seven years, with expertise in start-ups, fundraising, promotional campaigns, small business management, and agricultural economic development. She is the past chairperson and a founding member of Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA,) and has provided technical assistance to farmers in the Farm Viability Enhancement Program for the past four years. Kelly is based at UMass/Amherst and can be reached at 413-545-2353. ▲

Farmers' Market Opportunities

Adams, Wednesdays, Noon – 3:00 pm, Begins July 18. Seeking all types of vendors. Everett Randall, 413-743-3111.

Arlington, Wednesdays, 2:30 pm – 6:30 pm, Begins July 11. Seeking a small farm, specialty items. Oakes Plimpton, 781-899-2403.

Barre, Saturdays, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm, Begins May 12. Seeking vegetable growers. Julie Rawson, 978-355-2853.

Cambridge/Charles Square, Sundays, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm, Begins June 3. Seeking honey, vegetables, fruit. Tim Garboski, 508-883-3397.

Charlestown/Boston, Wednesdays, 2:00 pm – 7:00 pm, Begins July 18. Seeking all types of vendors. Colleen Justice, 617-241-8866.

Holden/Tuesday Evening Market, Tuesdays, 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm. Begins May 8. Seeking bakers, crafters, potatoes. Jacqui Marsh, 978-874-0244.

Massachusetts Turnpike – Various locations beginning in May, including Lee, Charlton East and Westbound and Natick. Donna Hill, 781-431-5097.

Melrose, Thursdays, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm, Begins June 21. Seeking small vegetable or organic farm. Sally Frank, 781-324-9648.

Newton, Tuesdays, 1:30 pm – 6:00 pm, Begins July 10. Seeking eggs, milk. Judy Dore, 617-552-7120.

Quincy, Fridays, 11:30 am – 5:00 pm. Seeking fruit grower, baker. Harry Johnson, 617-479-1601.

Shrewsbury, Tuesdays, 11:00 am – 3:30 pm, Begins June 12. Seeking 1 fruit grower, 1 baker, 1 auxiliary vendor. Andrew O'Keefe, 508-753-7761.

Springfield Cooperative, Saturdays, 7:00 am – 11:00 am, Begins April 28. Seeking baked goods for entire season, certified organic produce and assorted fruits and vegetables from June through October. Al Fini, 413-786-1012.

Springfield/Farmers' Market at the X, Tuesdays, 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm. Begins May 1. Seeking honey, lamb and turkey products. Belle Rita Novak, 413-737-1724.

Sturbridge, Thursdays, 11:00 am – 3:30 pm, Begins June 14. Seeking 1 fruit grower, 2 auxiliary vendors. Andrew O'Keefe, 508-753-7761.

Waltham, Saturdays, 9:30 am – 2:30 pm, Begins June 16. Seeking maple syrup, turkey products, flowers, honey, organic produce, baked goods and preserves. Jennifer Rose at 781-893-0361.

Worcester/Eastside, Mondays, 9:30 am – 2:00 pm, Begins June 11. Seeking 2 auxiliary vendors, such as baked goods, honey, maple products. Andrew O'Keefe, 508-753-7761.

Farm-City Connections

Public Market Exhibit Makes a Colorful Debut at Flower Show

A public market could provide a year round flower show, visitors learned at the Department's exhibit at the New England Spring Flower Show in Boston. The inspiration for the exhibit was the age old concept of the public markets of Europe and North America.

The colorful explosion of native flowers and plants and the generous bounty of fresh Massachusetts fruits and vegetables showed just how exciting a public market might be in Boston or other Massachusetts cities!

The public market exhibit also featured products from Massachusetts dairy farms and a cornucopia of local specialty products such as maple syrup, honey, herbs and preserves. Also popular were native Bay State seafoods and a huge array of freshly baked breads and pastries.

The year round indoor market concept pleases discerning local consumers-- and also inspires local farmers to grow and market new products to help keep our agricultural lands in business.

Such a market is usually a public-private partnership. The most notable examples on this continent are the Pike Place Marketplace in Seattle, the Vancouver public market and the Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia. The best known public market in Europe is probably in Barcelona, Spain, but the indoor public market is an institution in large and small cities across the continent.

According to the Chefs Collaborative, "as chefs looking for ways to support Massachusetts agriculture, the concept of a permanent public market is very exciting to us."

The New England Spring Flower Show at the Bayside Expo Center in Boston runs March 17-25. For info on the Friends of the Public Market, call Janet Christensen, 617-626-1735 or e-mail jchristensen@state.ma.us.

Teachers' Workshops, Conference Coming Up

Plans are in the works for a "Growing Minds through School Gardens" conference at UMass Amherst on April 28th. For info, e-mail Will Snyder, wsnyder@umext.umass.edu or phone 413-545-3876.

Agriculture in the Classroom workshops are planned for May 5th in Dartmouth on aquaponics, May 19th in Eastham on aquaculture and June 27 in Sudbury on annuals and perennials. Contact Debi Hogan at dchogan@sprynet.com or phone 508-336-4426. ▲

Farm Viability Prog. Applications Ready

Applications are now available for the state's Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP). The program is designed to assist farmers in improving the economic bottom line and environmental integrity of their operations through the development and implementation of tailored business plans.

The FVEP program has three phases: In Phase I, the farmer works with a planning team to develop a plan to increase on-farm income and preserve the farm's environmental resources. In Phase II, funding may be available to the farmer to implement his or her plan in exchange for implementing selected elements of the plan and an agricultural use covenant. Phase III is a reporting phase after completion of the recommended changes.

Applications are available at the DFA offices in Boston and Lancaster, at the USDA NRCS and FSA County Offices or by calling the Farm Viability Program in Lancaster at 508-792-7711 ext.14. The deadline for applications is Friday, March 30, 2001. ▲

USDA Assistance For Cranberry Producers

USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation has announced that the Cranberry Market Loss Assistance Payment Program is available to cranberry producers to help offset low market prices in the 1999 crop year. Producers will receive almost \$20 million in financial relief for the loss of cranberry markets.

To be eligible for the program, a cranberry farmer must have produced cranberries in the U.S. during the 1999 crop year; not have been compensated for the market loss of cranberries by any other Federal program, except under the Federal Crop Insurance Program; be engaged in the business of producing and marketing agricultural products at the time of application for payment; and submit a timely application.

Applications have been mailed to each farm by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Washington, DC. Producers who have not received their application should call 202-720-1919. The application and more information are available on the web at www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/psd.

The signed application must be returned to FSA in Washington by mail (return receipt is recommended) or by a private parcel delivery service. Signup ends at the end of March. ▲

Club Managers to Hold Mini-Trade Show

Massachusetts farm and specialty food producers are invited to take part in a mini-trade show and reception at the Lanam Club in Andover on May 7th as part of the New England Club Managers Association monthly educational meeting.

The Association has over 200 member clubs, including golf, city and yacht clubs, with many located in Massachusetts. The monthly meetings generally attract approximately 80 attendees. This is a great opportunity to showcase your products to an audience of private club managers and chefs.

Exhibitors participating in the mini-trade show will be provided with an 8 or 10 foot table. Space under a 40 x 40 foot tent, as well as lawn space, is available. Electricity will also be available for those that may need it.

Tentative details include set up from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm; trade show from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm, association business meeting at 5:30 pm and a guest speaker at 6:00 pm. From 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm, a reception featuring exhibitors' products will be held.

The only cost for vendors is to provide the chef, Soren Christensen, with product for the reception menu. Space is limited. For more information, contact Soren Christensen at 978-475-5210. ▲

Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism

The Department of Food and Agriculture, in conjunction with the departments of Environmental Management and Fisheries and Wildlife, will have a complimentary trade show space at the 14th Annual Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism sponsored by the Mass. Office of Travel & Tourism on April 2-4 at the Sheraton, Hyannis.

We would like to have some farm agri-tourism brochures on hand in our display. Please send a few copies of your brochure prior to the conference to: Anneli Johnson, MDFA, 251 Causeway St., Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114.

Farms involved in tourism activities are encouraged to attend this fine state conference. For conference registration and information, please contact Phil Croteau, of Mass. Office of Travel & Tourism, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 02116, 617-973-8516, fax 617-973-8525, Phil.Croteau@state.ma.us. ▲

2nd Berkshire Grown Effectiveness Study

The Berkshire Grown campaign has released the results of its 2000 season survey. Berkshire Grown facilitates partnerships between 65+ professional food buyers (mostly restaurant chefs) and 75+ local food producers (mostly farmers), in order to support local agriculture and bring fresher food to those in the region.

During the 2000 growing season, member restaurants and stores increased their buying of farm produced products by 16.44 percent. Cumulatively, over the two active Berkshire Grown growing seasons (1999 and 2000) there has been a 46 percent increase. The 2000 increase was despite the cold and damp weather that 54 percent of the farms say lowered their yield.

Seventy-two percent of farmers polled took on new member customers, mostly restaurant chefs, through support from the Business to Business Berkshire Grown Program. Thirty-seven new farmer accounts were reported with member restaurants.

Nearly 78 percent of farmer members felt Berkshire Grown helped them most by promoting agriculture in the community, educating the public on the importance of supporting local food and farms, and coordinating the business to business "Berkshire Grown" program.

Some 62 percent of those polled say that the widely distributed "Berkshire Grown Buyer's Guide to Locally Grown Food, Flowers and Plants," brought more people to their farm, despite the bleak growing season. ▲

Agri-Tourism Road Show

DFA staff are often asked to speak to groups about agri-tourism in the commonwealth. We would like to have a ready-to-go slide show for such presentations. Since we don't have time to visit farms to take photos, we are asking farms to send us a slide or two of their agri-tourism activities.

Slides might show inter action with students, children in a pumpkin patch, folks picking apples, or farmland vistas.

Please send slides to Anneli Johnson, Agri-Tourism Program, MDFA, 251 Causeway St. Boston, MA 02114. For more information, contact Anneli at 617-626-1755, anneli.johnson@state.ma.us. ▲



CLASSIFIED

Barley straw wanted, eastern Mass. 508-758-2678.

Pot pies: chicken, turket, pork, etc. Unquestionably the highest quality products available. Offer your customers truly "gourmet" and microwaveable pies! Call for samples: 401-862-2525 or 508-584-9300 x305.

Mixer wagon "Little Augie" like new. \$6000 or B/O. 5200 self-propelled forage harvester, 3 row head, 4 WD, \$15000. Call 413-568-7133.

Young Suffolk ram. Proven breeder. \$100. Leave message. 781-878-6920.

Surge milking machine pump. Ran 3 units. 508-943-6520.

For sale: 900 ton corn silage, 413-436-5505.

Mohair socks: you'll never again wear any other kind! Han dyed in every color of the rainbow. Lightweight \$18, boot weight \$28. Small fit women up to shoe size 9 1/2; large fit women up to shoe size 10 and most men. Check our web site for details (www.keldaby.com) or call 413-624-3090 to order.

For sale: Eriez bag loader, exact scale. Like new. Replacement cost: \$11,000. Asking \$4950. New England Cranberry 508-486-9898.

For sale: trade show display - backdrop, shelves, lights. Folds into 2 canisters. \$4975 new, asking \$2750. Good condition. New England Cranberry 508-486-9898.

Livestock Manager, New England Heritage Breeds Conservancy. Breed conservation project in Berkshire Co. Experience and management skills. 413-698-2044. Resume: PO Box 20, Richmond, MA 01254.

Opportunity for experienced farmer/organic vegetable grower. Possible future partnership interest. Hutchins Farm, Concord, MA, 978-369-5041, hutchfarm@earthlink.net.

Farm Help wanted starting 4/1/01, please call Bob's Turkey Farm, Lancaster, MA, 978-365-9271.

Business and financial planning. Insurances including disability. Send for our brochure. Initial meeting is free. Woody Pratt, Sherwood Consultants, 617-232-8818, shercons1@aol.com.

Old Mountain Farm; Nigerian Dwarf Goats. Taking Reservations for bottlefed kids. Registered, Show quality, Blue eyes, HES, Healthy, start at \$125. Cape Neddick/York Maine, email olmtfarm@gwi.net, 207-361-2126.

For sale: corn silage. North Attleboro, 508-699-2153.

Bee Equipment: 300 10-frame 9 5/8" boxes w/9 comb \$10 each. 100 10-frame 6 5/8" boxes w/ 9 comb \$7 each. Call 508-763-9584, rberndt@tmlp.com.

How to Place a Classified Ad

Classified ads are accepted free-of charge on a first-come basis. Limit: 25 words. Be sure to include a phone number. No display ads will be accepted. Only one ad per business/individual per issue, unless space permits. Ads may run in consecutive issues, space permitting.

Ads must be of interest to Massachusetts farmers. The Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture reserves the right to refuse any listing it deems inappropriate for publication.

Send typewritten or neatly printed copy to:
Farm & Market Report
Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114
617-626-1752 fax: 617-626-1850
e-mail: Diane.Baedecker@state.ma.us

BOOKMARK IT!

The New England Agricultural Statistics 2000 annual bulletin is now available on line at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/nh/00start.htm>.

Farm & Market Report monthly

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Department of Food and Agriculture



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This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.

Berkshire, Franklin Co. Farmers Eligible for Disaster Assistance

A major disaster has been declared for two Vermont counties due to damage by severe storms and flooding December 16-18. Farmers in contiguous Massachusetts counties -- Berkshire and Franklin -- are also eligible to receive disaster assistance through the USDA Farm Service Agency. Family farmers who suffered qualifying physical and production losses from the disaster and cannot get affordable credit may qualify for reduced interest loans. Contact your local FSA office for details. ▲

calendar 2001

April 2-4 - **Governor's Conference on Travel & Tourism** at Sheraton Hyannis. For more information, contact the Mass. Office of Travel and Tourism MOTT at 617-973-8500.

March 17-25 - **New England Spring Flower Show** at the Bayside Expo Center, Boston. Sponsored by the Mass. Horticultural Society. Call 617-536-9280 for details.

March 27 - **Agriculture Day at the State House**. Farmers visit with their legislators to discuss issues, speaking program at the Grand Staircase, and Taste of Massachusetts Reception in the Great Hall. Contact Mary Jordan, 617-626-1754, mary.moffitt@state.ma.us for details.

May 7 - **Club Managers Mini-Trade Show** at the Lanam Club, Andover. Local growers and specialty food producers invited to exhibit. Sponsored by the New England Club Managers Assoc. Contact Soren Christensen at 978-475-5210.

May 26 & 27 - **Massachusetts Sheep & Woolcraft Fair** at Cummington Fairgrounds. For information on participating or attending, contact Becky Peterson, Orchard Valley Farm, 413-624-5562 or visit www.masheepwool.org.

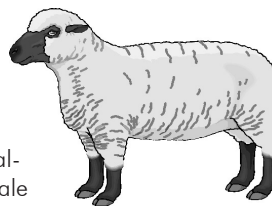
June 2 - **Annual Swine Information Day and Auction**, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Deerfield, NH fairgrounds. Free admission. Mini-trade show, 4H food concession. Auction at 1:00pm. Sponsored by the New Hampshire Pork Producers Council. Call 603-768-5545 for more information.

July 13-14 - **New England Sheep Show and Sale**, Eastern States Exposition (The Big E) fairgrounds, West Springfield, Mass. Sponsored by the New England Sheep and Wool Growers Association. contact Becky Peterson, 413-624-5562, orvalbc@shaysnet.com

N.E. Sheep Show

The New England Sheep Show and Sale will be held July 13 & 14 at the Big E Fairgrounds, West Springfield, Mass. in the Malory Agricultural Complex. The sale is open to all breeds of sheep; entry fees are \$15 for ewes and \$20 for rams. The entry deadline is April 15.

The New England Sheep and Wool Growers Assoc. sponsors the sale, now in its 59th year. This has become one of the major purebred sales in the U.S., attracting consignors and buyers from all over the nation.



A used sheep equipment auction is held in conjunction with the sale. Proceeds benefit the Northeast Youth Sheep Show, which is held the same weekend at the Big E fairgrounds. A symposium on marketing small ruminant genetics will be held on Thursday July 12.

For more information about the sale and/or entry forms contact Becky Peterson, Sale Manager, 41 Bell Rd., Leyden, MA 01337, 413-624-5562 or e-mail orvalbc@shaysnet.com. ▲

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